



# A new feminine ideal in art

A new exhibition at Asian Art Works in 798 Art Zone brings together six artists to discuss the feminine ideal of the liberated Chinese woman.

Seen together, they present an image of women looking to be set free but unsure what to do with their newfound freedom.

Read more on Pages 4-5

## Red walls run yellow at Beijing marathon

Page 2



## School kids starve for world poverty day

Page 3



## Critical film illustrates life of parasite singles

Page 6

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# Red walls run yellow at the Beijing Marathon

By Zhao Hongyi

Within minutes of leaving the starting point at Tian'anmen Square, thousands of the 35,000 runners in the 33rd Beijing Marathon stopped to wet the red walls of the Forbidden City last Thursday.

Their astounding display of "culture" in the raw was an embarrassment for officials eager to rehabilitate the image of Chinese nationals abroad.

State media were quick to blame the incident to an alleged lack of toilets at the starting line.

But marathon organizers said they installed 300 portable toilets at the starting line, with another three to five toilets at every 5-kilometer point in the course.

"We have prepared enough toilets according to the requirement of the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF)," said Liu Maogong, one of the organizers.

Runners blamed the incident on tension, which made it difficult to urinate before the race began. "I was too excited and nervous to pee before the start," said Xu Jianchun, a runner from Beijing.

Several sports doctors said athletes often have an urgent need to urinate once a race begins.

"Athletes are under a lot of pressure before the competition begins," said Wang Wenjian, a professor from Beijing Sports University. "Once it starts, they often have a psy-



The 2013 Beijing Marathon opened on October 17.

BYD Photos



Runners could not help urinating during the marathon.

chological need to urinate."

A spokesman for the Beijing Municipal Bureau of the Environment said the mass urination – which had small, yellow rivers flowing along

parts of the wall – was detrimental to the environment.

In the previous years, competitors who could not find a toilet withdrew from the competition and missed

the chance to receive an award. A female competitor surnamed Liu said she had to run into a McDonald's to find a toilet during last year's race.

The event, first held in 1981, is well known abroad and attracts many runners from East Africa.

"This kind of thing happens almost every year at the Beijing Marathon," said Xu Jianchun, a runner, "We never thought it would be such big news this year."

Mass urination is at odds with to the polished city image the government hopes to project. It fre-

quently calls on residents to "behave properly" in public by keeping their clothes on during the summer and urinating in toilets.

This year, there were many foreigners photographed among the other urinators.

Organizers said they would install more toilets next year to discourage runners from holding in their fluids before the race.

Marathons in London, Detroit, Hong Kong are much more better equipped. In Hong Kong, the organizers install three to five portable toilets of the course.

## Names needed for new stations on second phase of subway Line 6

By Zhao Hongyi

The Beijing Municipal Commission of Urban Planning is looking for ideas about what to call the stations of its latest subway project.

The second phase of subway Line 6 starts from Caofang Station and ends in Dongxiaoying, Tongzhou District. The 12-kilometer line includes seven unnamed stations.

"The station names used to come from the subway planners and historical



A map of the seven stations in Tongzhou District

experts, with minor adjustments made depending on public reaction," said Zhao Chengfu, a spokesman for

the commission. "This time, we are collecting suggestions first and leaving the final choice to the experts."

Names must consider the history of the location, reflect the city's current naming trend and be easy to remember.

The commission will be collecting suggestions through November 16 at its official website, [www.bjghw.gov.cn](http://www.bjghw.gov.cn).

The new stretch of Line 6 broke ground last year and is expected to open by

2015.

### Station Locations:

- Fuhe Street and Beijing Wuzi University
- Beiguan Street and Yongsun Northern Street
- Xinhua North Street and Dongguan Street
- Zhaodengyu Street and Yudaihe Street
- Yunhe East Street and East 6th Ring Road
- Yunhe East Street and Songliang Road
- Yunhe East Street and Guihua Road



# Students starve for poverty day

By Zhao Hongyi

To raise awareness about poverty and cultivate good habits, middle schools throughout the capital organized students to survive on less than 6.1 yuan on October 17, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

A day of hardship proved too much for many students in the generation of "little emperors," with 12 percent breaking their spending limit and the rest resorting to starving or begging to get by.



Yang Yuchen (left), a student at Tsinghua Affiliate School, and her classmate could only afford porridge in their school cafeteria.

BYD Photo

## Below the poverty line

The UN defines \$1 (6.1 yuan) of spending money per day as the world poverty line.

To help students understand hardship, 17 local middle schools, including Tsinghua Affiliate School, Beijing No. 11 School and Beijing Institute of Technology Affiliate School, organized 52 students to survive one day on less than 6.1 yuan in the Chinese capital.

Students whose commuting expenses would break the limit or who were hypoglycemic were not eligible for participation.

Three of the 20 participating students at Tsinghua Affiliate School failed to control their spending, and many who managed – usually by skipping meals – said they considered the limit extremely unrealistic.

Most students swapped nutritious school lunches for free rice, pickled vegetables and a glass of boiled water. Many relied on bread the

whole day.

The students said they were used to spending 20 yuan per day on food – 12 yuan on lunch and close to 10 yuan on dinner – with more money available for other leisure activities.

A decade ago, \$1 was equal to 8.23 yuan. But years of stagnant wages and steep inflation have crushed the yuan's buying power, causing many food commodities to double or triple in price.

The most basic cafeteria meals today cost between 12 and 15 yuan.

## A day of misery

Zhang Ziyang, a student at Shunyi Renhe School, managed to spend only 5.8 yuan.

"I avoided the cafeteria rush and only went in at the end," she said. "I begged one auntie to let me eat her leftovers for free. I spent 0.8 yuan to get 100 grams of rice."

"All I felt throughout the day was miserable and tired," said Yang Yuchen, a student at Tsinghua Affiliated School.

"But trying this allowed me to see how many others have to live."

Yang spent 5.97 yuan during the day. She spent 0.3 yuan for a cup of porridge in the morning, 0.4 yuan for public transportation, 2 yuan for a jianbing at lunch and



Zhang Ziyang of Shunyi Renhe School had breakfast of a bread alone.

another 0.4 yuan for transportation home. Her dinner of rice and a fried tofu cost 2.87 yuan.

"I'm sure that none of us can survive like this every day," said Chen Yuan, a stu-

dent at Yucai School. "I can see why we need to save more money to help people who are less fortunate."

China is especially prone to natural disasters, such as the Wenchuan Earthquake in 2008, the crop-wrecking freeze of 2009, the Yushu Earthquake of 2010 and severe floods throughout the last two years.

Although children used to be very active in charitable causes, allegations of fraud in the Red Cross and other charities has led many parents to discourage the practice.

## Building good habits

The UN has promoted the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty since 1993.

The day is designed to raise awareness about the gap between rich and poor, with a long-term goal of slashing the percentage of people living below the poverty line by 2015.

In China, teaching children to appreciate poverty has become a job for the par-

ents. In Mao Zedong's era, students usually worked in the countryside for two days each year as part of a campaign to "remember past suffering and appreciate the good times."

But three decades of reform has crushed such conservative habits. Many Chinese today make a hobby of bragging about their wealth – even when they have none.

The "One Dollar A Day" campaign was the latest of several attempts to cultivate a fiscally conservative mindset.

"We should let the kids starve one day every month so they can appreciate what they enjoy today and work hard to keep it," said Wang Jun, a sociology professor at Peking University.

"The day should be more ceremonial – designed to stress the point we want the kids to remember: China is not always a rich country."

He suggested extending the campaign to include adults.



798



# exhibition explores neo-femininity in China



By Zhao Hongyi

Asian Art Works in 798 Art Zone is presenting a new collection of sculptures, paintings, photos and installations that demonstrate the struggles and dreams of modern Chinese women.

"Feminine Ideal," the exhibition, includes pieces by Fan Xiaoyan, Qiao Haimo, Hasang Liu, Qi Xing, Song Ying and Zhang Peng that examine the significance of the female body, beauty and culture.

Each artist uses a unique visual language to portray the feminine ideal, either as a subject of power, provocation, innocence or beauty.

Collectively, these works represent the ever-changing feminine symbols of a new China, and also demonstrate the evolving social environment that inspires such diverse ideals.

The paradigm of femininity is more than just beauty.

Feminine power combines with acute vigor in the sculptures of Fan Xiaoyan. Her humanoid robots are a provocative statement about the sexual empowerment of a generation of women warriors.

Jiao Haimo paints the attributes of female identity, particularly hair. As if shining a mirror onto a place invisible to the subject herself, Jiao painstakingly captures the personality and essential emotions of her subjects with subtle layers of brushwork.

Hasang Liu is interested in how we use memories to construct our imagined ideas of perfection. Using a complex multimedia process, in which the artist paints in oil, destroys and rebuilds, her creations are splintered recollections of idealized moments.

As a realist painter, Qi Xing employs traditional oil painting methods to depict the modern human being. Her female subjects are not so much idealized as they are captured in idealized moments, when they can be one with nature and free to be themselves.

Qi's paintings encapsulate a sense of time and memory that is intermingled in the everyday scenes that she portrays, resulting in works that are

personal and emotionally reflective.

Song Ying paints portraits of Chinese women from past times. When seen from a distance, the series of Chinese opera performer portraits has an alluring beauty, like the characters on an old black-and-white television screen with static.

Zhang Peng used to be a professional painter, and the composition of her photographs retains that feel.

Seen together, the exhibition chronicles the Chinese woman's shift from depression to liberation.

But visitors can easily find one shortcoming in these works: all the women are looking to be set free, but few have any idea what to do after they have been liberated.

The message has a more contemporary analogy: while everyone today wants to get rich, few people know what to do once they have money.

"The Chinese were depressed for many years," said Tiffany Berea, curator of the exhibition. "They wanted to liberate themselves but lacked any long-term plans."

"The focus today is less on breaking the existing rules than finding a way to build new rules," Berea said.

The exhibition will remain open through November 10.

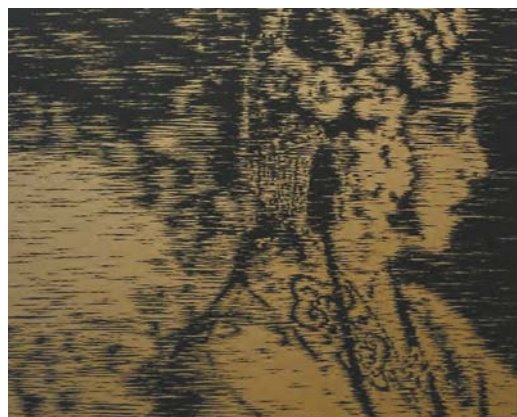
**Asian Art Works**

Add: D-09-2, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Beijing 100015

Tel: 5762 6338

Email: info@asianartworks.net

Open: Tuesday-Sunday, closed Mondays



*Made in China No. 2,*  
Zhang Peng, C-Print



*Role No. 5,*  
Song Ying, oil on canvas



*Role No. 6,*  
Song Ying, oil on canvas





# Songzhuang

## remembers 20 years of cutting-edge creation



By Zhao Hongyi

In 1994, a group of artists were chased out of Yuanmingyuan, the holy land of Beijing's moonstruck young artists.

Most were fresh graduates of art academies or young artists from other provinces. Lacking Beijing hukou, they were lumped in with the city's "floating population" of "undesirables."

The group, led by such artists as Fang Lijun, Liu Wei, Wang Qiang, Gao Huijun, Yue

Minjun, Li Xianting and Zhang Huiping, eventually found a new home in Songzhuang, a dusty village on the outskirts of east Beijing only 7 kilometers from Hebei Province.

Though faced with several land disputes, the artists continued with their mission, drawing more young creatives to the east side and turning Songzhuang into Beijing's new center of contemporary art.

Twenty years have passed, and hundreds of great artists have found their start in the little village. Their works reflect a new side of society that is wholly different from the peasant-inspired works of the last generation.

This new exhibition, the collective memory of Songzhuang, brings together the creations of 720 artists who have spent time in the village.

"Art history is a history of saying no to the sands and accepting only real gold," said Li Xianting, a representative of the first group of artist settlers. "Songzhuang is our example of that."

The exhibition will be open through November 18 in the village art center.

**Songzhuang Art Center**

Address: Songzhuang Art Zone, Tongzhou District, Beijing 101118

Tel: 8957 9897

Take Bus 808 or 809 from Dabeyiao Station (near Guomao) to Songzhuang Art Center

Open: Tuesday-Sunday, closed Mondays



*The Winding Earthly,*  
by Fan Xiaoyan, stain-  
less steel and brass



*Wang Yiqiong's work*



*Xia Xiaowan's work*



*Song Wei's work*



*Qi Zhilong's work*



# Critical film tackles the topic of China's parasite singles

By Annie Wei

Worsening employment prospects and a shrinking population have yielded a Chinese generation with an absurdly high concentration of parasite singles.

Independent filmmaker Lei Yong's debut *The Young Play Games, The Old Play Tai Chi* tells the life of one such young man.



Director Lei Yong

It's hard to say when Sheep, a 31-year-old Beijinger, last held a job.

While he's quick to defend his sloth as "waiting for the chance to achieve something great," Sheep's life primarily consists of sleeping, drinking and watching porn.

He and his father fight often. Sheep complains that his father failed to provide him with a comfortable life, while his father bemoans his son's lack of income.

Sheep's best friend is a thief named Bread, who frequently brings his other thieves to Sheep's apartment in search of something they can swipe and hawk.

None of them has anything that could be considered a job.

Sheep's daily excitement is stalking strange girls and scaring them. He does seem to care about one of them, but his story ends in tragedy.

"Sheep has many problems, but he's not really a bad person," said director Lei Yong. "His parents have plenty of their own issues."

The family is designed as a common product of the nation's family planning policy: one has created a generation ripe with single children who are spoiled until they break.

Although many young people go through a transition phase where they live off their parents, Sheep is an extreme example. His character seems to blend all the worst aspects of Don Quixote and writer Lu Xun's character Ah Q – maybe with a bit of the *Shameless* thrown in just to make it weird.

He shouts at his father, blaming him for "destroying me" by failing to become a high-ranked government official or businessmen.

Even without a job or income he likes to brag and often asks his mother for money to

treat his friends to dinner.

The film takes a brutal look at the human tendency to lie or complain when one is unable to face his shortcomings. Lei said he believes all viewers will find a few moments where they acted uncomfortably similar to Sheep.

*The Young Play Games, The Old Play Tai Chi* is Lei's first film.

Born in 1974 in Shanxi Province, Lei got his start in media as an editor and reporter. He also wrote several short stories, published in *Literature of the Yellow River*.

Director Jia Zhangke's film *The Pick-pocket* was Lei's primary inspiration.

"Before I saw that film in 2008, I thought cinema stories had little to do with me," Lei said. "The world of commercial film is too unrealistic."

But he soon realized film could be about things he or the average person knows or feels.

"My main disadvantage was a lack of basic filmmaking skills," Lei said. "I had no experience in using a video camera, composing scenes or editing clips."

His actors and actresses were all normal people rather than professionals.

"The friend I asked to play Sheep has been out of work for several years. I was also working as a freelancer. His story was something that resonated with both of us," Lei said.

Other actors, such as Bread, were selected from migrant workers Lei met on the street. The actor who played Bread was very interested in the film and willing to act for free. He also rounded up several friends to be part of the production.

"Amateur actors and actresses are what I needed," Lei said. He could not afford professionals, and the story of the film is much closer to the lives of normal people.

Lei said he wrote the script in a



black notebook one week before shooting. He reworked the dialogue based on how the actors performed on the first day.

"Some of the original lines seemed too stiff and unnatural for the actors," Lei said.

Lei is currently working on a new film *Guarder, Guarder's Friend, the Girlfriend of the Guarder's Friend*.

The film continues his trend of tackling the extremes of modern Chinese society with irony, criticism and wit.

*The Young Play Games, The Old Play Tai Chi* is available in full on the streaming video site Tudou.com.



Sheep and a masked woman



Sheep (left) and his unemployed friends



The 31-year-old Sheep brings a woman home for the first time.



Sheep buying DVDs

Photos provided by Douban



# Bartering and shopping

By Annie Wei

Shopaholics probably remind themselves a million times that it might be a good idea to buy less.

Really, what are you going to do with that sixth bottle of shampoo in your bathroom? Or the dozen perfumes? Or the clothes you only wore to that one party?

But shopping is fun, and the feeling of finding something special can really make your day. Sometimes, the satisfaction of a good deal lasts for seasons – especially when that good deal is a quality fur coat.

This week, *Beijing Today* scouted a new market that promises plenty of interesting finds.



Designer's new dress



New felt bags



Designer's jewelry



Used shoes

Photos by A.A



Photo provided by Neemic

## Winter clothes comfortable as a cocoon

Neemic is a fashion project founded in 2011 by Amihan Zemp and Hans Martin Galliker, two local expats.

The brand is their effort to develop a new fashion label that acts as a cultural bridge between Europe and Asia and brings sustainable design to the Chinese

industry.

Its new winter collection, titled Cocoon, debuted last weekend.

The clothes, like the silky cocoon of the butterfly, are designed to be a soft and protective shell during the harsh winter weather.

The new collection combines Neemic's minimalist design with

## Tucheng Space's monthly barter market

BIFT Part hosted its second barter market last Sunday. The event is the brainchild of Aria Liu and her friends.

"People, especially young female professionals, are looking for good ways to ditch the things they no longer want," Liu said.

Liu, the marketing director of BIFT Fashion Investment Management Center, called her friends who work in the fashion, lifestyle and media industries to set up their first swap meet.

Products up for barter included skin care essentials, digital products, fall and winter apparel, books, furniture and home and kitchen items.

"Vendors" are allowed to negotiate their own swaps or name a cash price, such as 20 yuan for a necklace. Random visitors are welcome to participate.

Li Ziqi, an editor at *Bazar* magazine, gave away a tight, black winter Moschino skirt with red lip patterns to one of her friends.

"We've been having a good time," Li said. She and the other vendors were trying on each other's clothes.

Visitors with nothing to exchange can pay a reasonable price. A bottle of makeup remover that normally sells for 140 yuan new can be found at the barter market for as little as 40 yuan.

Some of the items up for swap were original pieces by young designers.

We liked the skirts and sweaters from a designer at the BIFT center. She focuses on tight, wool pencil-skirts with corrugated edges that give a slender and curvy look. Price range from 880 yuan to as much as 2,000 yuan.

Clothes that could not be bartered but were still unwanted could be donated to charity: underwear excluded.

If you're not in the mood for shopping, the venue still has a nice loft area that's perfect for enjoying a cup of coffee. The terrace faces Tucheng Park, and is quiet and relaxing.

## Tucheng Space

Where: First floor of BIFT north gate (300 meters right of Jian'an Dong Lu, north of the Sino-Japanese Friendship Hospital)

Tel: 6452 0843

handmade, natural ramie fabrics from Summerwood. Most are black and white, with silky inner layers and organic cotton fleece.

## B.N.C

Where: NLG09A, Village North, 19 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: Tel: 10 am – 8 pm

Tel: 6416 9045



## Wines of the Week

## Great value wines by Rioja Bordon



Rioja Bordon in 2004 (left) and 1975 vintage

Photo by A.A

By Annie Wei

This week we sampled six wines from the Spanish cellars of Rioja Bordon, including its Bordon Gran Reserva 2004, Crianza 2007 and 2008, and even a vintage wine from 1975.

Bordon Gran Reserva 2004 (400 yuan or less) is currently Beijing's best buy for reserve wines, said Lu Weily, owner of wine house The Loop.

The wine is aged three years in American oak barrels before aging another three years in the bottle. Like most classics from the Rioja region, it pairs well with red meats.

A bottle of 1975 reserve still tastes excellent, so a bottle of Reserva 2004 can probably be stored until 2045.

Founded in 1890, Rioja Bordon is one of Spain's most prestigious wineries. To ensure quality, it routinely ages all its wines longer than legally required both in barrel and in bottle. The winery uses modern technology and adheres to the tough quality controls of the European Union.

Rioja Bordon is a well known brand in Spain. Its white wines rank in Spain's Top 3 and its Crianza wines are served at 90 percent of the country's restaurants. You can also find them at duty-free stores all over the world.

Its white wine Diamante (178 yuan) is a pleasant choice that pairs well with spicy Chinese food, tasting slightly sweet with mildly acidic.

If you are hosting a family and need six to eight bottles, the Rioja Bordon Crianza 2008 (460 yuan for 1.5 liters) is ideal. Its aged one year in American oak and goes with everything from seafood to steak.

For something more special, you can try Bordon Reserva 2005 (780 yuan). It's aged aromatic French oak instead of American oak. The winery only product 60 barrels in a good vintage.

Anyone interested can find more of the winery's products at The Loop.

**The Loop**

Where: 101, 36-1, Sanlitun Hou Jie, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am - 7 pm

Tel: 8772 5713

## Made from the Market

## Herbal paste for beauty and vigor

By Annie Wei

Winter is approaching fast, and our bodies are preparing for the temperature drop by storing more energy from the foods we eat.

For those wary of adding pounds with baked goods, consider a snack of *guyuangao*, a traditional food and medicine.

Guyuangao was created some time during the Tang Dynasty. Its main ingredients include *ejiao*, a gelatin made from donkey hide, black sesame, chestnuts, Chinese dates, rock sugar and yellow rice wine.

All the ingredients are known for enriching circulation, easing menstrual pains and improving the skin and hair.

Wang Xiaomao, a graphic designer, has been making traditional guyuangao to sell online.

"Everyone can make it at home by following a simple recipe," Wang said.

However, high-quality guyuangao requires some planning.

Wang purchases his ingredients from reliable suppliers: the *ejiao* comes from a vendor in Shandong Province, the Chinese dates, sesame seeds and chestnuts come from Beijing's local Farmer's Market.

Wang's mother and aunt help to prepare the ingredients, washing and drying the sesame seeds, opening the chestnuts and coring the dates.

"The hard part is staying patient when mixing the ingredients over a low flame," Wang said. "They burn easily."

Last year was Wang's first time making guyuangao. Initially, she was making it for herself to compensate for poor life habits.

"I partied too much last year. My schedule was unhealthy and left me feeling weak and tired," she said. "But after a week of eating guyuangao I felt more energetic."

However, guyuangao is not for everyone. Eating it too often can cause hyper circulation.

It's best to eat only 18 to 50 grams per day. If you develop pimples or begin to feel weak, consult a doctor of traditional medicine.

**Easy recipe for homemade guyuangao:**

- 1) Use an equal amount of each ingredient. Grind separately to ensure they are absorbed while cooking.
- 2) Combine the ingredients.
- 3) Put the mixture into a container and cover it.
- 4) Steam the container for 1.5 hours over boiling water.
- 6) After it cools, store it in a clean, dry jar in the refrigerator. It can keep for up to one year due to the alcohol.
- 7) Always cut the paste with a dry knife to prevent mold.

Add more herbs to improve circulation.



Baked goods topped with the paste

CFP Photos